

How Does Christ's Second Coming Happen in Two Phases?

Sixbert SANGWA • January 25, 2025

The return of Jesus Christ is a cornerstone of Christian eschatology, yet it remains a topic of significant debate and misunderstanding. Many believers grapple with questions about the sequence of events leading up to Christ's return, the nature of the Rapture, and the final Second Advent. By examining these phases in light of Scripture, we gain a clearer understanding of God's divine plan for humanity's ultimate redemption. This brief article will explore the phases of the Second Coming as depicted in biblical prophecy, addressing misconceptions and encouraging believers to discern spiritual truths.

The Two Phases: Rapture and Second Advent

The Second Coming of Christ unfolds in two distinct phases: the Rapture and the Second Advent. These events are separated by the seven-year Tribulation, also known as the Seventieth Week of [Daniel 9:24-27](#). While both phases focus on Christ's return, they differ in purpose, timing, and audience.

The Rapture: Christ's Coming for His Church

The Rapture represents the moment when Jesus calls His Church—the body of believers—to meet Him in the air. This event is described as imminent, meaning it could occur at any moment. The Apostle Paul writes, "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air..." ([1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#)). This imagery is further reinforced in [Revelation 14:14-16](#), where one "like the Son of Man" comes on a cloud to harvest the earth, distinctly separate from the later harvest of judgment in [verses 17-20](#).

This phase is a fulfillment of Jesus' promise in [John 14:1-3](#), where He assures His disciples that He is preparing a place for them and will return to take them to be with Him. Jesus also promises to keep His Church "from the hour of testing that is going to come on the whole world" ([Revelation 3:10](#)). This protection is beautifully foreshadowed in [Isaiah 26:20-21](#), where God calls His people to "Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut your doors behind you. Hide for a little while until the wrath has passed." The Rapture is indeed an act of deliverance, sparing the Church from the coming wrath during the Tribulation ([1 Thessalonians 1:10](#)).

In [1 Corinthians 15:51-53](#), Paul explains the mystery of this event, describing how believers will be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," receiving incorruptible bodies. He further elaborates in [Philippians 3:20-21](#) that our citizenship is in heaven, and Jesus will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body. The call to readiness is echoed in [1 Thessalonians 5:23](#), urging believers to be sanctified completely in preparation for the coming of our Lord.

The Second Advent: Christ's Return to Earth

The Second Advent marks Christ's visible and triumphant return to Earth to establish His millennial kingdom. Unlike the Rapture, this event occurs after the Tribulation, as detailed in [Revelation 19:11-16](#). At this time, Jesus will defeat the Antichrist, judge the nations, and restore righteousness to the world. Jesus foretold this event in His Olivet Discourse, saying, "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" ([Matthew 24:30](#)). This moment is further emphasized in [Acts 1:9-11](#), where angels assure the disciples that Jesus will return in the same way He ascended into heaven. The Second Advent is also described in [Daniel 7:9-14](#), where the Ancient of Days bestows dominion and glory upon the Son of Man. This event will bring the fulfillment of prophecies such as [Zechariah 14:4-5](#), where the Lord's feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, splitting it in two. Unlike the Rapture, which occurs in secret, the Second Advent will be visible to all.

In [Matthew 25:31-46](#), Jesus describes the judgment of the nations, where He will separate the righteous from the wicked, rewarding the faithful and condemning those who rejected Him. This judgment coincides with the establishment of His millennial reign, as prophesied in [Revelation 20:4-6](#).

The Seven-Year Tribulation

The period between the Rapture and the Second Advent is characterized by unprecedented suffering and judgment, as Jesus warned: "For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again" ([Matthew 24:21](#)). Known as the Tribulation, this seven-year period fulfills Daniel's prophecy about God's dealings with Israel and the world ([Daniel 9:24-27](#)). The period is divided into two equal parts of three and a half years each ([Daniel 7:25](#), [Revelation 11:2-3, 12:14](#)), with the midpoint marked by the Antichrist breaking his covenant with Israel ([Daniel 9:27](#)).

During this time, the Antichrist will rise to power ([Revelation 13:1-10](#)), deceiving many and establishing a false peace ([2 Thessalonians 2:3-4](#), [Daniel 11:21-24](#)). However, this peace will be short-lived, as God's judgments—the seals ([Revelation 6](#)), trumpets ([Revelation 8-9](#)), and bowls ([Revelation 16](#))—are poured out upon the earth. As prophesied in [Joel 2:30-31](#) and [Isaiah 13:9-11](#), there will be signs in the heavens and great disturbances on earth.

For believers, the Tribulation serves as a reminder of God's sovereignty and justice ([Isaiah 26:9](#)). This period mirrors Elijah's prophetic ministry, where he declared a drought for three and a half years ([1 Kings 17:1](#), [James 5:17](#)), symbolizing the spiritual drought of the first half of the Tribulation, followed by the return of rain, representing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Israel in the second half. Many will come to faith during this time ([Revelation 7:9-14](#)), including a special ministry of 144,000 Jewish witnesses ([Revelation 7:4-8](#)). This ministry is particularly significant as God fulfills His promise to Israel in [Zechariah 12:10](#): "I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem." Despite intense persecution ([Revelation 13:15-17](#)), many will remain faithful unto death ([Revelation 12:11](#)). This period underscores the call to endure and remain steadfast in faith, as highlighted in [Hebrews 9:28](#) and [Revelation 13:10](#).

Addressing Modern Misconceptions

The Second Coming is often dismissed as a myth or relegated to conspiracy theories, yet current global events align strikingly with biblical prophecies. The unprecedented rise in apostasy within traditional Christian denominations, the increasing persecution of believers worldwide, and the rapid embrace of secular ideologies mirror prophetic warnings. The emergence of global governance structures, digital surveillance systems, and calls for unified economic systems echo the infrastructure described in prophetic texts. As Paul cautioned, "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work..." ([2 Thessalonians 2:7](#)).

While Jesus clearly stated that no one knows the day or hour ([Matthew 24:36](#)), the Holy Spirit is preparing the Bride of Christ for His return. As we draw closer to that day, the Spirit provides wisdom and discernment to those who diligently study Scripture ([Revelation 3:3](#)). For instance, Hosea's prophecy suggests intriguing timing: "After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up" ([Hosea 6:2](#)). If we consider that Israel rejected Christ around 33 AD, and that a day with the Lord is like a thousand years ([2 Peter 3:8](#)), the "third day" - Christ's millennial reign - could begin around 2033. Subtracting seven years for the Tribulation suggests significant events could unfold before 2026.

Believers must reject spiritual apathy and remain rooted in God's Word, especially as we witness the realignment of nations, the rise of anti-Christian sentiment in formerly Christian nations, and growing support for a one-world religious system. By studying prophecy and current events through a biblical lens, we equip ourselves to recognize truth amidst deception, fulfilling our call to be the light of the world ([Matthew 5:14-16](#)).

Conclusion

The phases of the Second Coming remind us that the Rapture - the next event on God's prophetic calendar - could be closer than we realize. As Daniel prophesied in [Daniel 12:10](#): "Many will be purified, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand." Only those who are spiritually wise through the Holy Spirit's guidance will discern the signs of the times.

Consider these vital questions: How does your understanding of Christ's imminent return impact your daily walk with Him? Are you actively preparing your heart and spirit for His coming? In a world growing increasingly hostile to biblical truth, what steps are you taking to remain steadfast in your faith?

As Jesus taught in [Matthew 25:1-13](#), the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five were foolish and took no oil, while five were wise and took extra oil.

When the bridegroom was delayed, the foolish ones ran out of oil and missed his arrival. Like the wise virgins in this parable, we must ensure our lamps are filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit, for that moment could come at any time.

In these increasingly dark times, we are called to be vigilant watchmen, sharing the hope of Christ's return while there is still time. What role are you playing in warning others about the coming judgment? By staying rooted in God's Word and walking in the Spirit's guidance, we can help others prepare their hearts for the glorious moment when the trumpet sounds, and the Bride of Christ is called home.

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